

The Success and Adaptability of String Projects: A Common Practices Survey

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**Abstract**

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This document is an analysis of the problems facing public school string education and what is actively being done currently to help with the problems. It catalogs the issues of teacher retention, teacher recruitment and failure to reach underserved populations. This document also examines what current solutions are in place such as after school programs and partnerships with artists. Furthermore, it includes a new survey of the common practices of String Projects across the country to strengthen the argument that these programs are successful in attaining their goal and are highly adaptable.

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The Success and Adaptability of String Projects: A Common Practices Survey

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## Chapter 1

### **Introduction: The Problems of Public-School String Education**

At the time of the publication of this document, the music education system for string instruments in the United States struggles to be accessible to a large demographic of elementary and high school students, a problem that has been recorded since the 1960s. Studies have shown that the country's public schools struggle to make string music education more accessible to a diverse student body.<sup>1</sup> Research shows that colleges and universities are currently not providing enough well-trained public-school string educators to replace those who are leaving the profession.<sup>2</sup> In many areas of the country, unqualified string players are teaching in public school strings classrooms, one of the places where underserved populations can gain access to string education. Across research, educators reported that they were not given enough hands-on experience during training, and that this is a reason that they are leaving the profession faster than they are entering it, creating school programs that are in constant flux.<sup>3</sup> The String Project has a long history of addressing these problems and has remarkable success rates across the country, they are highly adaptable, and as my research shows many directors of these programs attest that they have transformed string communities around them.

In 1837, Lowell Mason made one of the first arguments for public school music education when he petitioned the Boston school board to include vocal music in elementary

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<sup>1</sup> Olson, Catherine Applefeld. "In the Service of Strings: a South Carolina Professor Is Doing All He Can." *Teaching Music* 17, no. 3 (2009). 46.

<sup>2</sup> Shumaker, Jodie, A. "The National String Project Consortium and its Efforts to Alleviate the String Teacher Shortage: A Summary of the 2005 Ohio Music Education Association Research Forum Presented by Dr. James Byo." *Contributions to Music Education* 32, no. 2 (2005). 82.

<sup>3</sup> Shumaker, The National String Project, 82.

schools.<sup>4</sup> Mason stated that music was a “mighty power” that would “humanize, refine and elevate the whole community” and was therefore worthy of consideration in the school curriculum.<sup>5</sup> The tradition of group classroom string teaching can be traced back to the early 1900s when Albert Mitchell started teaching in Boston after observing a group teaching situation in England.<sup>6</sup> By the 1920s, a recorded 350 cities across America had string education programs in the public schools that included suburban areas and large cities such as Los Angeles, Pittsburg, Cleveland, and Detroit.<sup>7</sup>

String programs continued to be the most popular instrumental programs in the schools until after World War I. After the war, marching bands became very popular, as they were seen as a sign of patriotism and populism.<sup>8</sup> Many Army bandsmen took advantage of the G. I. bill and attended college for music; and upon graduation, many returned to their home communities to educate children in the public-school programs.<sup>9</sup> Due to the influx of band-focused music educators and the growing popularity of the marching band, the interest in string education began to dwindle beginning in the 1960’s.<sup>10</sup> String programs continued to shrink with the rise of dance bands and jazz heard on the radio, while string orchestras were still performing primarily European music, with which general American audiences had little connection.<sup>11</sup> In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, music education journals reported a shortage of teachers available to fill

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<sup>4</sup> Gillespie, Robert, Russell, Joshua A., and Hamann, Donald L. “String Music Educators' Perceptions of the Impact of New String Programs on Student Outcomes, School Music Programs, and Communities.” *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 62, no. 2 (2014). 176.

<sup>5</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May. “An Examination of the Issues of Non-String Teachers Teaching strings.” Master Thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, (2008). 1 Accessed October 1, 2021, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis.

<sup>6</sup> Gillespie, Robert, Russell, Joshua A., and Hamann, Donald L., String Music Educators' Perceptions,176.

<sup>7</sup> Gillespie, Robert, Russell, Joshua A., and Hamann, Donald L., String Music Educators' Perceptions,176.

<sup>8</sup> Gillespie, Robert, Russell, Joshua A., and Hamann, Donald L., String Music Educators' Perceptions,176.

<sup>9</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May, An Examination of the, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Gillespie, Robert, Russell, Joshua A., and Hamann, Donald L., String Music Educators' Perceptions,176.

<sup>11</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May, An Examination of the, 3.

the role of public-school string teacher.<sup>12</sup> This is a trend that can be seen today in the school systems, as the number of students interested in playing keeps increasing but the number of string teachers is continuing to decline.<sup>13</sup>

Studies conducted at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century show that there was still an increasing interest from string education students, but school programs were decreasing in numbers suggesting that there was a lack of instructors. A survey conducted by C. Leonhard of public schools in 1989 showed that 35% of elementary schools, 41.9% of large middle schools, and 36.9% of large secondary schools offered string instruction to the students.<sup>14</sup> From 1987 to 1989 enrollment in public school string programs grew by 43% showing that interest in string education from students continued to rise.<sup>15</sup> This study found that there was a substantial decrease in the number of schools offering string instruction from 1962 to 1989 across all levels, even though interest in the string programs continued to rise.<sup>16</sup>

Another problem that has been observed across the country is that teachers are teaching outside of their given specialty, in part due to colleges not graduating enough music educators who specialize in string education.<sup>17</sup> In 1993, Jenkins investigated the backgrounds, attitudes, and training of string teachers in the schools and found that 30% of those responding were not string players.<sup>18</sup> In 2005, a study by Schumaker showed that 31% of all string classrooms do not

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<sup>12</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May, An Examination of the, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Byo, James L., and Jane W. Cassidy. "The Role of the String Project in Teacher Training and Community Music Education." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 53, no. 4 (2005). 332.

<sup>14</sup> Leonhard, C. "Status of arts education in American public schools." *Urbana, IL: National Arts Education Research Center at the University of Illinois*. (1991).

<sup>15</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann. "The Status of Orchestra Programs in the Public Schools." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 46, no. 1 (1998). 76.

<sup>16</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann. *The Status of Orchestra*, 76.

<sup>17</sup> Shumaker, Jodie, A., *The National String Project*, 82.

<sup>18</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann. *The Status of Orchestra*, 76.

have someone teaching who is a string specialist, suggesting that the problem still exists.<sup>19</sup>

Music teachers do not have the authority to decide which areas they will be teaching unless they take a cut in pay and benefits by choosing to only teach one area. In larger cities like Seattle, teachers are often required at the elementary and middle school level to cover a broad range of areas and are expected to be teachers for both wind and string classrooms.<sup>20</sup>

Music education students' experiences often do not match the reality of the job after graduation. According to a survey by Newbrey, some wind players who are currently teaching strings responded that they felt their string methods classes were not long enough and that they did not feel applicable to their first year of string teaching.<sup>21</sup> Others from this same survey responded that they were not required to take a string methods class.<sup>22</sup> When forced with the reality of teaching other areas such as strings, many wind players find their training to be inadequate. Often while in school they are required to take two courses, split into two classes of upper and lower strings, and that is the extent of their string pedagogy. These classes are often taught by adjunct professors or teaching assistants and focus more on how to play the given instrument rather than how to approach teaching beginners in a group classroom setting.<sup>23</sup> Most music education programs focus on skills such as conducting, rehearsal techniques, and ensemble work but most wind music education students do not specialize in teaching early beginning string skills during their training. Because they do not have experience with this during their degrees, they have the skillset to teach more advanced students but lack the skills to

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<sup>19</sup> Shumaker, Jodie, A., *The National String Project*, 83.

<sup>20</sup> Hellekson, Stephanie. Personal interview. 21 May 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May, *An Examination of the*, 61-62.

<sup>22</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May, *An Examination of the*, 61.

<sup>23</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May, *An Examination of the*, 33.

teach fundamental techniques to a beginner.<sup>24</sup> Music education students who are interested in working with that age group could major in early childhood music education or string pedagogy but outside of a few schools, there is currently a lack of programs for the education of beginning string players.

Public school strings programs are viewed as an important way to give opportunities to underserved students who may not have access to string education otherwise. When analyzing what is happening in large cities like Seattle in terms of producing high-level talent, some would describe it as a successful, well-working music education system, but these students are among the most privileged students in the country. Many of them start when they are young in a private program outside of school, they then go on to participate in a high-level youth orchestra, mostly not affiliated with a school program, and upon graduation attend some of the country's best conservatories. In America, there is not a shortage of high-level performers, there is a shortage of high-level string teachers. Dr. Jesselson, Professor Emeritus of the University of South Carolina and former President of the National String Project Consortium, said “It's ridiculous. Our country is so focused on producing high-level players, but these people have no sense of reality about the job situation. And meanwhile, there is a complete lack of qualified teachers to fill open jobs in the public schools.”<sup>25</sup> Because of this focus on producing the highest-level performers, many underserved children in our communities are left behind. Outside of a public-school program, there are very few ways for underserved children to start string education, so this could be the most logical focus for improvement. The lack of these programs could be one of the reasons for the lack of diversity in the western classical music community.

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<sup>24</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May, *An Examination of the*, 36.

<sup>25</sup> Olson, Catherine Applefeld, *In the Service of*, 46.

This leads into another problem of failing public school string teaching, when there are not strong school programs diversity is scarce. Yes, there are currently high-level young players, but they are from similar backgrounds, which explains the lack of diversity when looking at professional classical musicians. The average string student population is made up of only 27% non-white students.<sup>26</sup> Based on teacher's responses 73% of students were white, 9.6% African American, 9.2% Asian, 8.16% Hispanic and .04% Native American.<sup>27</sup> One strategy that could be used to increase diversity is to provide high quality string teaching in the public schools from educators that come from these underserved communities.<sup>28</sup>

Today the shortage of qualified string teachers continues to grow; annually 11,000 music teachers leave the profession, and 5,500 music education degrees are earned.<sup>29</sup> This number suggests that the string community could aim to double the number of music educators they are graduating each year to help address the issue. Numbers from the early 2000s show that in one year 43% of the string teaching jobs were not filled.<sup>30</sup> This is also the case in Seattle. In 2019, high school educators were calling around to local gig musicians and private teachers to see if they had any interest in coming in and serving as a teacher even if they had no formal qualifications. I and many of my friends and colleagues were among those that were contacted. As Dr. Jesselson stated, we need more public-school educators, but most university efforts are to recruit more performers to enter an oversaturated market.

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<sup>26</sup> Barnes, Gail V. "The University of South Carolina String Project: Teaching and Learning within a Community Music Program." *International Journal of Community Music* 6 no. 1 (2013). 24.

<sup>27</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann., *The Status of Orchestra*, 83.

<sup>28</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R. "A Mixed Methods Portrait of Urban Instrumental Music Teaching." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 59, no. 3 (2011). 239.

<sup>29</sup> Shumaker, Jodie, A., *The National String Project*, 82.

<sup>30</sup> Byo, James L., and Jane W. Cassidy, *The Role of the*, 332.

## Chapter 2

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

This chapter will outline the relevant literature and research pertaining to some of the problems discussed in chapter one. While there were many issues discussed earlier, they can be organized into three broad categories: teacher recruitment, teacher retention and failure to help underserved communities.

#### Teacher Recruitment

Music students are not seeking jobs in music education upon graduation and may need encouragement to pursue a career path according to studies like the one conducted by Frink in 1997.<sup>31</sup> He studied undergraduate string majors' attitudes toward high school orchestra experiences and found that students currently majoring in music did not feel that they were encouraged to go into the field. This section will focus on the current research into why this problem exists and what current efforts are in place to help.

One reason music students are hesitant to go into education could be how public-school teachers view themselves and how they are viewed by others in the music industry.<sup>32</sup> Kjelland suggested in 1996 that the string teacher shortage may be due to entrenched sociocultural views, stating that the main challenge to recruiting more string teachers is what she calls "performance elitism."<sup>33</sup> They describe people who subscribe to performance elitism as "those who view

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<sup>31</sup> Frink, K.L. "Undergraduate string majors' attitudes toward high school orchestra experiences, high school orchestra instructors, and string teaching." Master Thesis, University of Colorado, (1997). Accessed October 1, 2021, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis.

<sup>32</sup> Kjelland, J. "My Turn: Where have all the teachers gone? Bringing the ecosystems into balance." *American String Teacher*, 46, no. 2 (1996). 91-92.

<sup>33</sup> Kjelland, J., My Turn: Where have, 91.

music performance through a competitive survival-of-the-fittest paradigm.”<sup>34</sup> When musicians surround young students with performance elitism, they could be less likely to view other areas of music favorably. Music educators could be encouraging to students who showed interest in music teaching but a survey of music education majors by Bergee found that “two-thirds of the respondents reported they had received negative remarks from their teachers about becoming professional music educators.”<sup>35</sup>

Despite this negative advice many students are still choosing a career in music education. These students share common background and experiences that could be useful information when looking to recruit more music education students. Results of a study by Gillespie and Hamann in 1999 showed that 89% of music education majors participated in their high school orchestra program, and 82% were also enrolled in their middle school orchestra program.<sup>36</sup> This shows that the next generation of public-school teachers will most likely be students currently in those classrooms now. The study previously mentioned by Frink in 1997 reported that music education students enjoyed their high school orchestra experience and believed that what they learned there helped them to be better players and musicians.<sup>37</sup> University students responding to an investigation by Ploumis-Devick and Clinton revealed that private lessons and ensemble participation during high school were the most important musical reasons for choosing a degree in music education.<sup>38</sup> What these studies make clear is that if there is an absence of strong public school strings programs, there will be an absence of students pursuing the career path. This data

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<sup>34</sup> Kjelland, J., *My Turn: Where have*, 91.

<sup>35</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann. “Career Choice among String Music Education Students in American Colleges and Universities.” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47, no. 3 (1999). 267.

<sup>36</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *Career Choice among String*, 271.

<sup>37</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *Career Choice among String*, 268.

<sup>38</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *Career Choice among String*, 267.

also suggests that to increase the number of music education students, colleges should look to recruit from the best high school programs locally.

A survey by Gillespie and Hamann from 1998 attempted to collect data on why education majors decided on this collegiate path and what help educators could give in fostering young aspiring teachers. It also helped develop a profile of who is currently teaching in the schools. The results showed that more women were teaching strings than men, that the teachers were typically white, and that four out of five had a master's degree.<sup>39</sup> Two-thirds of respondents said that they participated in a performing group on a regular basis.<sup>40</sup> Data collected revealed that 58% of respondents rated their collegiate training as adequate or below adequate.<sup>41</sup> The conclusion of this study showed that in general string teachers have a suburban, middle-class background but many of these teachers who live and teach in urban areas struggle to find longevity in the job because they do not have a specialized skill set as to work with those students.<sup>42</sup>

Figures 1 and 2, found below, show data from the previously mentioned Gillespie and Hamman survey and list the factors influencing music education majors' decision to major in string education and recommendations for teachers to help interested students in string teaching. This data could be used by university professors, private teachers, and high school classroom teachers to help encourage students to choose a career in music education. The top-ranking factor influencing these students was that they liked teaching and found it to be rewarding work.

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<sup>39</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *Career Choice among String*, 84.

<sup>40</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *The Status of Orchestra*, 84.

<sup>41</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *The Status of Orchestra*, 84.

<sup>42</sup> Kjelland, J., *My Turn: Where have*, 91.

Table 1  
*Factors Influencing Decision to Major in Strings/Orchestra Music Education*

Rank	%	Frequency	Factor
1	10.8	70	Liked teaching as profession; rewarding work
2	10.6	69	Enjoyment and love of music
3	9.4	61	Desire to enrich and share joy of music with others
4	9.1	59	Love of children, people, working with groups
5	7.2	47	Influence of school orchestra teacher
6	6.8	44	Job market security: String teachers are needed
7	6.2	40	Performing and desire to keep involved with music
8	4.6	30	Enjoyment of teaching experiences
9	3.9	25	Desire to be a role model for children and positively influence them
10	3.7	24	Desire to promote a noble image of strings in the schools
11	3.7	24	Influence of private teacher
12	3.7	24	Love of the sound of stringed instruments

Figure 1: Factors Influencing Decision to Major in Strings/Orchestra Music Education from Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann. "Career Choice among String Music Education Students in American Colleges and Universities." *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 47, no. 3 (1999), 272.

Other factors on this chart that are interesting to note are the influence of school orchestra teachers, enjoyment of teaching experience and a desire to promote a noble image of strings in the schools. The second chart that was generated from this study lists recommendations for local string musicians and teachers to help promote string teaching as a viable career option for young musicians.

Table 2  
*Recommendations for Teachers to Interest Students in School Orchestra Teaching*

Rank	%	Frequency	Recommendation
1	17.7	61	Serve as a role model: relate positively to students by showing your love for teaching and creating a positive learning environment
2	16.9	58	Give students teaching and conducting opportunities
3	13.4	46	Talk to students about the values of a career in orchestra teaching, including personal satisfaction and job security
4	8.4	29	Focus on the positives of school orchestra teaching, not the negatives
5	6.7	23	Challenge students with a variety of music
6	5.5	19	Take a personal interest in students who express a desire to teach
7	4.9	17	Make students' orchestra and music experience enjoyable and fun
8	4.7	14.5	Talk with students about your personal growth as a musician and teacher as a result of being an orchestra teacher in the schools

Figure 2: Recommendations for Teachers to Interest Students in School Orchestra Teaching from Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann. "Career Choice among String Music Education Students in American Colleges and Universities." *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 47, no. 3 (1999), 273.

These recommendations could be assessed by high school classroom teachers, private studio teachers, and university professors to see the largest increase in music education student enrollment. The number one recommendation is to serve as a role model and relate positively to your students. Another recommendation high on the list is to give students teaching and conducting experience to determine their level of interest. High school instructors could set up student conductor programs at their school as a senior incentive or have older students who have shown interest in music education teach a portion of a class. These researchers suggest that these experiences could be just what young students need to give them the push to major in education in college.

Private lesson teachers could also be an influence given the amount of one-on-one time they have with students. Public school teachers and studio teachers could work as a team by not devaluing each other's chosen career paths in front of students. To encourage more students to teach privately, studio teachers could encourage their more advanced students to take on students themselves or be given time to work with younger students within the same private studio.

Then comes the influence of the university professors who in some cases could have more influence on music students than their high school teachers. According to research, the systems that are in place for some music education students do not give them hands-on experience early in their education. At universities without a String Project, it could be that student teachers are not in front of a classroom until their student teaching assignment near the end of their education. There are also cases of inadequate student teaching or student teaching outside of their specific area. Students for instance could have a goal of teaching in a string classroom but are assigned to a general music classroom for their student teaching experience. According to Figure 2, college teachers could encourage their students, both performance and education, to seek out teaching opportunities outside of school within their community. This could be coaching sectionals for a youth orchestra, instructing a few private students or volunteering with programs designed to help public school strings classrooms.

Another study that looked at how to attract more students to the profession took place in 1996 at Wichita State University where participants drafted ideas while at a string symposium.<sup>43</sup> One new idea presented was having colleges and universities offer string education scholarships.<sup>44</sup> Universities could use these scholarships to attract students to the profession who

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<sup>43</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *Career Choice among String*, 267.

<sup>44</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *Career Choice among String*, 267.

financially might otherwise not be able to attend college but fit the potential teacher profile listed above. Studies by Ploumis-Devick, Bergee and L’Roy all indicate that most music education students choose their path late in high school or in their early college years so these are the times to talk to students about this career path.<sup>45</sup> If possible, this is the ideal time to encourage students to get hands-on experience, before committing to a career of teaching. A study by Frink showed that 96% of music students were aware of the string teacher shortage but only 36% had any interest in teaching public school strings.<sup>46</sup> Based on this information one can infer that both students and teachers know there is a problem. Using the suggestions from the studies previously discussed in this chapter, there is a greater chance for increased enrollment in music education programs.

### Teacher Retention

After graduation, students enter the workforce, but data shows that the retention rate from year to year is low. A study by Schumaker reported high turnover rates, stating that 40-50% of all string educators leave the profession in the first five years of teaching.<sup>47</sup> That number has only increased from the late 1980s with one study showing that in 1988, 5.6% of teachers left the teaching profession whereas in 2005 8.4% of teachers left the profession.<sup>48</sup> A poll by Madsen and Hancock in 2002 showed that after 10 years of teaching 17% of teachers had left the profession and in 2008, that number had jumped to 34%.<sup>49</sup> Increasing enrollment is one way to

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<sup>45</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *Career Choice among String*, 268.

<sup>46</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *Career Choice among String*, 268.

<sup>47</sup> Shumaker, Jodie, A., *The National String Project*, 82.

<sup>48</sup> Russell, Joshua A. “A Discriminant Analysis of the Factors Associated with the Career Plans of String Music Educators.” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 56, no. 3 (2008). 205.

<sup>49</sup> Byo, James L., and Jane W. Cassidy, *The Role of the String*, 333.

help, but the numbers stated above show that there is also a problem keeping teachers in the profession.

In 2008, Russel conducted a study and found a few common factors that were influencing music educators career decisions as seen in Figure 3. Some of the notable reasons keeping teachers in the job include administrative support, teacher autonomy, and benefits to students.<sup>50</sup> The number one factor is how much support the string teacher received from their administration.<sup>51</sup>

**Table 1**  
**Factor Pattern Matrix for Career Decisions**

Item	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Administrator support	<b>.889</b>	-.025	-.051	.136	-.118	-.030	-.061	.066	.000
Teacher decision making	<b>.851</b>	-.073	.085	.017	-.025	.072	-.080	-.059	-.071
Relations with administrators	<b>.777</b>	.014	.036	.036	-.136	-.109	.122	.115	-.080
Teacher autonomy	<b>.659</b>	-.021	.143	.087	.075	.139	-.109	-.142	-.052
Collaboration opportunities	<b>.486</b>	.034	-.106	.093	-.045	-.032	.017	.107	.173
Teaching assignment	<b>.388</b>	.082	-.009	-.257	.247	.043	.074	.152	.065
Noninstructional duties	<b>.273</b>	-.034	.097	.054	.192	.048	.060	-.078	-.132
Emotional benefits to students	-.005	<b>.856</b>	-.038	.067	.012	.062	-.097	-.043	-.056
Benefits society as a whole	-.045	<b>.733</b>	-.021	-.015	.048	-.092	.010	.069	.064
Benefits other academic areas	.058	<b>.698</b>	-.039	.054	-.034	-.023	-.160	-.047	.034
Benefits music development	-.071	<b>.645</b>	.087	-.080	-.057	.051	.186	.040	.052
Inherent benefits to students	-.064	<b>.571</b>	.129	.019	.017	-.014	.084	-.057	-.146
Listening	-.098	-.023	<b>.811</b>	.011	-.092	-.022	.005	.175	.044
Historical context	.119	.100	<b>.722</b>	-.004	-.007	.064	-.008	-.134	.003
Evaluation	.082	.012	<b>.716</b>	-.090	.013	-.016	-.008	.085	.144
Composition	.108	-.010	<b>.661</b>	.113	.035	-.070	.046	-.121	-.064
Subject important to other faculty	-.035	.054	.028	<b>.676</b>	-.041	-.010	.241	.035	.052
Subject important to administration	.364	.009	-.050	<b>.664</b>	.029	-.089	-.070	.055	.002
Similar philosophy to administration	.260	-.027	.055	<b>.515</b>	.015	-.049	-.047	-.025	.093
Subject important to parents	-.047	-.024	.053	<b>.440</b>	.110	.101	-.040	.429	-.042
Subject important to students	.024	.062	-.009	<b>.363</b>	.113	.059	-.083	.348	-.039
Enjoyment of music teaching	.049	.026	-.040	-.032	<b>.728</b>	.058	-.001	-.040	.081
Commitment to music teaching	-.027	-.061	.035	-.021	<b>.666</b>	-.085	.023	.077	.036
Self-efficacy	-.246	.045	-.050	.258	<b>.538</b>	.014	-.038	.002	-.001
Teaching load	.221	.004	-.045	-.055	<b>.418</b>	-.060	.193	-.084	.038
Student quality	-.033	-.054	.014	-.081	-.052	<b>.797</b>	.131	.117	.026
Student motivation	-.057	.025	-.058	.059	-.014	<b>.793</b>	.052	.148	-.087
Student discipline	.366	.018	.000	-.063	.074	<b>.596</b>	-.204	.115	-.020

(continued)

<sup>50</sup> Russell, Joshua A., A Discriminant Analysis of, 216.

<sup>51</sup> Russell, Joshua A., A Discriminant Analysis of, 216.

**Table 1 (continued)**

Item	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Opportunity to advance	.002	-.003	.054	.013	.076	.083	<b>.534</b>	-.066	.004
Feeling isolated	.121	.041	-.096	.003	-.058	-.139	<b>.490</b>	.150	.029
Opportunity for higher pay	-.252	-.062	.105	.014	-.058	.058	<b>.481</b>	.133	-.144
Satisfaction with recognition	.154	-.071	.034	.133	.138	-.119	<b>.415</b>	.220	-.139
Frustration with music teaching	-.147	.002	.023	-.033	-.179	-.093	<b>-.400</b>	.013	.026
Policy dictating classroom	.077	-.032	-.027	.146	-.150	.255	<b>.322</b>	-.260	.256
Negative effect on home life	.149	.033	-.106	-.011	.048	.058	<b>.315</b>	-.111	-.041
Relationships with parents	-.010	-.054	.068	.032	.020	.120	.049	<b>.583</b>	.082
Community support	.009	-.008	-.100	.112	-.023	.187	.055	<b>.499</b>	.067
Relationships with peers	.284	.078	-.018	-.044	-.127	.004	.216	<b>.394</b>	.014
Playing an instrument	-.028	.001	.004	.034	-.001	-.013	-.102	.064	<b>.839</b>
Reading notation	-.160	-.038	.124	.055	.145	-.061	-.062	.064	<b>.666</b>

Note: Boldface highlights loadings for items representing each factor. Factor I = work culture, Factor II = perceptions of music benefits, Factor III = comprehensive musicianship philosophy, Factor IV = perceptions of the importance of music in curriculum, Factor V = psychological factors, Factor VI = student quality, Factor VII = professional frustrations, Factor VIII = community relations, and Factor IX = praxial music education philosophy.

Figure 3: Factor Pattern Matrix for Career Decisions from Russell, Joshua A. “A Discriminant Analysis of the Factors Associated with the Career Plans of String Music Educators.” *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 56, no. 3 (2008), 209-210.

Music teachers also face unique struggles and challenges that their academic colleagues do not which can cause them to feel isolated and under supported, according to this survey. Common struggles among these teachers included additional extracurricular responsibilities (extra rehearsals, performances, trips), managing large class sizes, overcoming perceptions of low curricular status, and coping with feelings of isolation.<sup>52</sup> Teachers' socioeconomic background also contributes to the trend of teachers leaving the profession early in terms of their financial need for the job. A study by Jianping found that teachers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to leave the profession.<sup>53</sup> As reported by a 1998 study by Gillespie

<sup>52</sup> Russell, Joshua A., A Discriminant Analysis of, 204.

<sup>53</sup> Jianping, S. “Teacher retention and attrition in public schools: Evidence from SASS91.” *Journal of Educational Research* 91 no. 2 (1997). 81-88.

and Hamann, most music teachers come from similar white suburban middle-class backgrounds.<sup>54</sup>

To increase the number of string teachers remaining in the profession, there are several things that administrators, university professors, and local artists could do to help them feel more supported, as reported by research from Russell. He compiled a list of recommendations as to how best to assist string teachers, especially in the beginning years. A few ways school administrators could help is to create policies that increase the professionalism of string teachers, this includes creating a professional work environment that affords teachers increased autonomy, opportunities for collaboration, and a greater role in the decision-making process.<sup>55</sup> Russell also suggests that administrators support teachers taking time off to further their own training or time to observe other string teachers in the area.<sup>56</sup>

University professors are another group that could positively impact young string teachers throughout the first few years of public-school teaching. A suggestion from Russell's research is for university string and music education professors to have a continued relationship with their music education students after graduation.<sup>57</sup> One issue from these studies that is repeated from public school educators is the feeling of isolation that they face. University Professors could help stay in contact as a way of creating a string teacher network of support. This could also be a recruiting tool for colleges by remaining in contact with alumni and their students.

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<sup>54</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *The Status of Orchestra*, 84.

<sup>55</sup> Russell, Joshua A., *A Discriminant Analysis of*, 217.

<sup>56</sup> Russell, Joshua A., *A Discriminant Analysis of*, 217.

<sup>57</sup> Russell, Joshua A., *A Discriminant Analysis of*, 217.

Local artists, including symphony musicians, freelance musicians, and private teachers, could also be helpful in terms of support and in shifting the image of public-school string teaching. Local artists could volunteer their time to help the public-school teachers or volunteer to help students out after school in a private lesson setting.

In conclusion, teachers are not staying in the profession for long but classical musicians can help support these instructors. As outlined above, the problem is that public school instruction is not functioning at its full potential with undertrained string teachers teaching for only a few years before leaving, and creating a revolving door of instructors for communities. Teachers are leaving at an alarming rate, but the larger music community can help turn this trend around.

#### Public School String Programs Helping Underserved Students

Public school strings programs are meant to give greater access to underserved communities. Earlier I described the situation in Seattle and how weak string teaching is hurting underserved children who do not have access to music instruction outside of the school system. For many performing classical musicians this situation could be hard to understand because it can look quite different from the experiences, they had growing up in the music community. Those who subscribe to the idea of performance elitism might not be interested in being the one to help with this problem. Hundreds of classical musicians graduate from conservatories who then find an oversaturated market.<sup>58</sup> The American classical music community is doing well when it comes to producing talent, but the research below shows that there is still room for growth when searching for ways to help underserved students through music education.

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<sup>58</sup> Olson, Catherine Applefeld, *In the Service of*, 46.

When examining orchestras around the country the data below shows that the majority of members come from similar backgrounds. Figures 4 and 5 show the race and ethnicity breakdown in orchestras according to the 2010 US Census Bureau. Figure 4 shows that the racial background of Americans consists of 77% who identify as white. Figure 5 shows that the racial background of American orchestra members consists of 87% who identify as white showing that the racial makeup of US orchestras does not mirror what we see in the country.

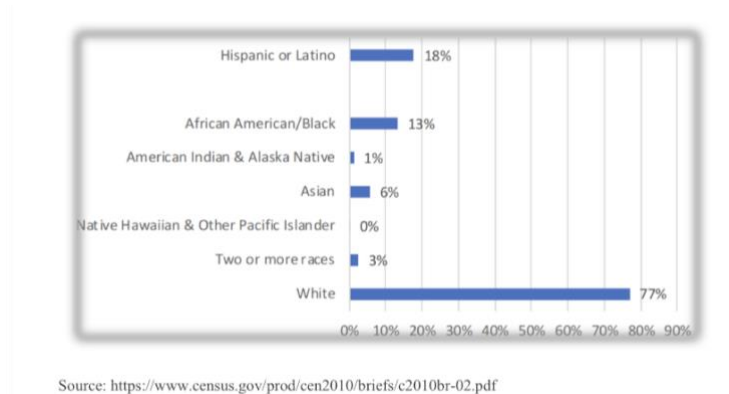


Figure 4: United States Census Bureau 2010 Race and Ethnicity Data from Tesar, Kathleen. *Diversity and Talent: How to Identify and Recruit Classical Music Students from among Underrepresented Populations*, (2018), 11.

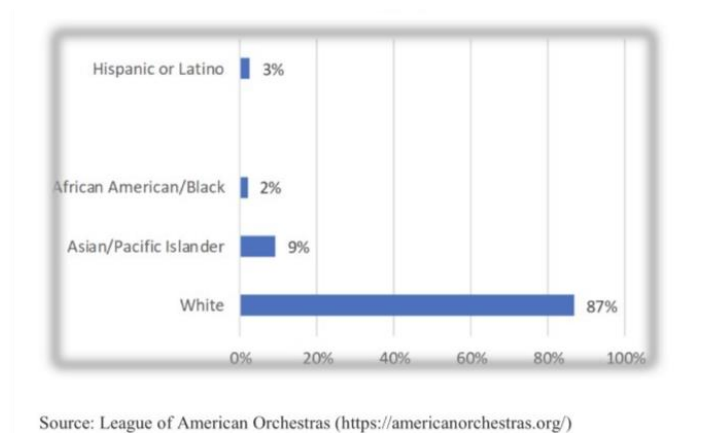


Figure 5: League of American Orchestras Data on Musicians' Race and Ethnicity from Tesar, Kathleen. *Diversity and Talent: How to Identify and Recruit Classical Music Students from among Underrepresented Populations*, (2018), 12.

The classical music community, at least in terms of major orchestras, still has work to do to get to the national average. Through the work of some of the following programs the gap is narrowing. Below three groups who are working to solve this problem across the country are highlighted as well as three groups that are helping locally in Seattle.

Nationally three programs that are helping provide string education services for underserved populations are Project STEP, the Gateways Festival and the Sphinx Organization. Since 1982, Project STEP (String Training Education Program) has provided talented young musicians that identify with historically underrepresented groups in classical music with comprehensive music instruction.<sup>59</sup> They have two main programs, one focuses on kindergarten music titled Focus, and the other provides comprehensive education from 1st through 12th grade.<sup>60</sup> The Gateways Festival is associated with the Eastman School of Music founded in 1993 with a mission to increase the visibility of classical instrumentalist of African descent.<sup>61</sup> The seven-day Gateways Music Festival features two full orchestra concerts, six chamber music performances, two piano recitals, two film screenings, two lectures, a panel discussion, and the Young Musicians Institute.<sup>62</sup> The Sphinx Organization was founded in 1998 to support Black and Latino classical musicians. They have grown since then to include educational programs, and artistic development initiatives as well as providing high quality performing groups.<sup>63</sup>The

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<sup>59</sup> Project Step. "About us." <https://www.projectstep.org/about-us/>. Accessed on Nov. 23, 2021.

<sup>60</sup> Project Step.

<sup>61</sup> Gateways Music Festival. "Mission and more." <https://gaewaysmusicfestival.org/mission>. Accessed on Oct. 23, 2021.

<sup>62</sup> Gateways Music Festival.

<sup>63</sup> The Sphinx Organization. "Sphinx Organization." <https://www.sphinxmusic.org/>. Accessed on Nov. 15, 2021.

Sphinx organization has also added to research on diversity in classical music reporting in 1998 that 2.7% of orchestra musicians were Black and the percentage jumped to 4.3% by 2016.<sup>64</sup>

There are many programs that exist across the country currently to aid the students who are enrolled in their public-school string classrooms. These programs are focusing on the short-term problem discussed in chapter one of helping underserved populations. They help the current students through programs with local symphonies, after school programs, and guest teaching artists. They help inspire some young children to participate in string education, but when they enter the public-school classroom, they are met with undereducated teachers.<sup>65</sup> Below are some of the programs in Seattle that currently take place to help public school students.

Seattle Music Partners is an el Sestema program in Seattle founded in 2000 to increase access for underserved students in the Central District, located in downtown Seattle.<sup>66</sup> They provide free private music lessons after school for local students. They discuss part of the problem with what is seen today saying “Reductions in funding for music in Seattle’s elementary schools had created a deep disparity in learning between students who had access to private music lessons and those who did not.”<sup>67</sup> The volunteers that help are mainly high school students or community members who work with more than 100 elementary school students.<sup>68</sup> Programs like this are also unique in that they give teaching opportunities to high school students who may then become interested in pursuing a career as a music educator.

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<sup>64</sup> The Sphinx Organization.

<sup>65</sup> Newbrey, Melissa May, An Examination of the, 30.

<sup>66</sup> Seattle Music Partners. “History.” <http://www.seattlemusicpartners.org/history.html>. Accessed on Nov. 5, 2021.

<sup>67</sup> Seattle Music Partners.

<sup>68</sup> Seattle Music Partners.

Local symphonies are also often called upon to help with this problem and do so through workshops and performances. Here, the Seattle Symphony has two major programs titled Masterclasses and Link Up.<sup>69</sup> The Masterclasses program is a series of classes for high level local students. These programs bring great attention to the Symphony, but the aim does not seem to be helping the underserved students in our city. The Link Up program is in partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute and provides concerts, virtual classroom visits, and a curriculum for voice, strings, and recorder for grades 3-5.<sup>70</sup> These are interactive concert experiences which go beyond the typical field trip to the symphony.

Teaching artists are another existing group of musicians that help by partnering with a school or individual teacher to inspire the next generation of artists through presentations and demonstrations.<sup>71</sup> Arts Corp is a group here in Seattle that organizes said Teaching Artists as well as teaching assistants. Research by Davidson, Howe and Slobado found that "highly skilled professionals who are either known to young learners personally, or who have been heard or seen via radio, recording, or video can act as highly positive motivators to a child's desire to learn a music instrument."<sup>72</sup> This study showed that children between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade tend to choose vocations that they are exposed to.<sup>73</sup> This same study also showed that students who participated in the partnership did enroll in instrumental music programs at a higher rate.<sup>74</sup> According to this research teaching artists work to inspire students to get involved with music.

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<sup>69</sup> The Seattle Symphony. "Home: Seattle Symphony." <https://www.seattlesymphony.org/>. Accessed on Nov. 5, 2021.

<sup>70</sup> The Seattle Symphony.

<sup>71</sup> Abeles, Hal. "The Effect of Three Orchestra/School Partnerships on Students' Interest in Instrumental Music Instruction." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52 no. 3 (Autumn 2004). 250.

<sup>72</sup> Abeles, Hal, The Effect of Three, 250.

<sup>73</sup> Abeles, Hal, The Effect of Three, 250.

<sup>74</sup> Abeles, Hal, The Effect of Three, 259.

A study by Gillespie and Hamann in 1998 showed that in general string teachers have a suburban, middle-class background, and often find it hard to teach in the local schools after attending a university in an urban setting.<sup>75</sup> Teaching in these kinds of environments requires a special set of skills and some experience with diverse populations.<sup>76</sup> According to a study by Fitzpatrick of the Chicago Public Schools music programs in 2011, teachers responded that they were guided in large part by contextual knowledge they gained as former students in the programs they now teach.<sup>77</sup> Because these teachers were from these communities themselves and had experiences similar to the students they were teaching, they felt that they were more equipped to have success with these students. These students have concerns about living in these areas such as wondering if they would be safe to take their instrument home to practice, and if young teachers are not exposed to problems like this in their training, they may have trouble understanding the needs of these students and could struggle to help them.<sup>78</sup>

One teacher, Mr. Moya stated, “Overall I think it (the experience of having started playing an instrument in high school) has given me a little perspective on how hard it is for kids, as much as somebody that’s been playing since fourth grade takes this for granted, maybe.”<sup>79</sup> To some professional performing musicians starting an instrument in high school could seem unthinkable but that type of thinking could hold educators back from helping a broader range of students. Mr. Moya on the other hand, expressed those teachers like him may be a better fit to instruct these students because they have a similar background and will be more willing to work with the students where they are. Quantitative data from this study also revealed that the

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<sup>75</sup> Gillespie, Robert, and Donald L. Hamann, *The Status of Orchestra*, 79.

<sup>76</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 229.

<sup>77</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 239.

<sup>78</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 240.

<sup>79</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 239.

participants considered the skill of “showing concern and care for students’ lives outside of school” to be significantly more important for the urban than the suburban environment.<sup>80</sup> Mr. Moya also said of teaching in Chicago specifically “They want to be respected and that’s a huge inner-city thing. These kids don’t get respect at home—they don’t get respect in real life, so if you give them that respect, they appreciate it. Even if they don’t always show it, they do appreciate it. And so that is sort of the way that I’ve been approaching gaining the kids.”<sup>81</sup> Quantitative data revealed that teachers believed they knew a good deal about the history of the neighborhood in which they taught and felt that the racial and socioeconomic levels of their schools were like those of the surrounding neighborhood.<sup>82</sup> 35% of participants indicated that they took a job in an urban school “because I wanted to help people,” 35.29% indicated “because I attended a CPS myself and wanted to give back,” and 16.47% indicated “because I didn’t get a job in a different setting.”<sup>83</sup> It seems that most of those who are taking these jobs grew up in these communities or wanted to help but there is still a percentage of educators that are filling roles they are unhappy with.

Another struggle sometimes unique to urban students is the access to and transportation of an instrument. This study shows that most students in the Chicago Public School District require the use of a school owned instrument which is not always available in the school systems. Elizabeth Nardone, who teaches in the Philadelphia public schools said, “The only thing holding me back from giving more students the opportunity to learn a stringed instrument is the number of instruments I have.”<sup>84</sup> Another report from Mr. Moya illustrating how important it is

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<sup>80</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 239.

<sup>81</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 239.

<sup>82</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 240.

<sup>83</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 244.

<sup>84</sup> Nardone, Elizabeth. Personal interview. 19 May 2021.

to understand the community can be heard when he describes the ways students must keep their instruments safe if they take it home to practice. Mr. Moya shared that he thought that they did not make it home to practice for two reasons “they don’t want to be seen with the instrument” and “they could probably have the instrument stolen from them.”<sup>85</sup>

If music education scholarships are used to recruit students from urban schools, the group of educators upon graduation could more closely reflect these communities. This study by Fitzpatrick also mentioned the “haven effect” of having an inclusive and successful music program.<sup>86</sup> The music classroom can be a safe haven for them where they feel they are respected; they have opportunities and that they are valued. These are especially important in urban areas, as stated by teachers above, but to have an educator skilled enough to handle the responsibility, specialized training and more experience working with a diverse student population is needed.

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<sup>85</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 240.

<sup>86</sup> Fitzpatrick, Kate R., *A Mixed Methods Portrait*, 250.

## Chapter 3

### **History and the Model String Project**

Chapter two reviewed some of the available literature on public-school string instruction in large urban areas and shared some of the available research addressing the problems facing public school string instruction. The research shows that after school programs, teaching artists and performance partnerships with local symphonies are all helpful when addressing the educational gap with underserved students, however, they do not get to the true root of this problem; how can more highly trained music educators return to their cities and provide solid music education to our underserved populations for a considerable time. There is, however, a training system that exists that addresses these problems, and has been successful in many geographic areas with a mission to expand, The String Project. The String Project is an after-school program for students starting 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade where student teachers, observed and assisted by music education faculty and graduate students, get unparalleled hands-on experience in teaching strings.<sup>87</sup>

The National String Project Consortium is a coalition of different String Project sites from around the country and is the main organizing body. Their goal is to start as many new programs as possible and as of now they have 42 institutions that are affiliated with the group that serve 2988 students and have 419 student teachers in training now.<sup>88</sup> They are committed to what they describe as leaving a dual legacy which includes preparing emerging string instrument music educators for success through experience, mentorship, professional development, while also addressing the teacher shortage and providing equitable access to inclusive and high-quality

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<sup>87</sup> The National String Project Consortium. "Home" <https://www.stringprojects.org/>. Accessed on Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<sup>88</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

string education for students of varied backgrounds and needs.<sup>89</sup> According to an article by Hurley the “guiding principle of a String Project is to provide college string majors with teaching experiences while providing pedagogy classes or supervision over a number of semesters in order to prepare the college students for private or public-school teaching while promoting the talents of pre-college string students.”<sup>90</sup>

The String Project was first conceived at the University of Texas in 1948 before being adopted by the music faculty at the University of South Carolina in 1974.<sup>91</sup> The program at USC is now the model program used by the National String Project Consortium to build more programs like it across the country. One person who became interested in these programs and helped with expansion was Dr. Robert Jesselson.<sup>92</sup> He first taught at Montana State University for a few years before getting the job at the University of South Carolina. He arrived in South Carolina in 1981 and had one cello student at the University who changed majors halfway through her freshman year leaving a cello professor with no cellists to teach.<sup>93</sup> He started to recruit from his new community only to realize that there were not many public-school string programs or solid string teachers. He decided the thing to do to help was to invest in the String Project and to expand these programs to more states and schools.

Although Dr. Jesselson had no experience teaching in the public schools he recognized their value when trying to expand access for string education. What new programs need are a master teacher, who is a part-time instructor that has taught in the public schools for several

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<sup>89</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

<sup>90</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

<sup>91</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 23.

<sup>92</sup> Olson, Catherine Applefeld, *In the Service of Strings*, 44.

<sup>93</sup> Olson, Catherine Applefeld, *In the Service of Strings*, 44.

years.<sup>94</sup> The master teacher serves as a model for the student teachers and provides feedback and pedagogical strategies.<sup>95</sup> At many string projects, the master teachers are graduate music education students who have had classroom teaching experience. The model program at USC has two master's students who serve as master teachers and a director who is a professor in the Music Education Department and is a string specialist.

The String Project is designed so that the student teachers and the participating children progress at an inverse relationship to their experience.<sup>96</sup> Student teachers begin by assisting a senior music education student in a 1st year heterogeneous string classroom with roughly 30 students. The student teacher's second year has them teaching private lessons on their primary instrument. In their third year, they continue to teach private lessons as well as a homogeneous class of second-year students. This class is suggested to be taught on the student teachers secondary string instrument. In their fourth year, student teachers are now the lead teachers of the heterogeneous class of first-year students.<sup>97</sup> This model gives each student time to experiment with differing types of string instruction all under the guidance of a lead teacher, giving them a wide skill set upon graduation.

The next section will look more closely at the model String Project at The University of South Carolina to show how their program is organized, what results they are seeing and how they are supported by the university. At USC between 25-30 undergraduate and graduate university students serve over 350 community students per year.<sup>98</sup> Tuition for the program is

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<sup>94</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

<sup>95</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

<sup>96</sup> Barnes, Gail V., The University of South, 25.

<sup>97</sup> Barnes, Gail V., The University of South, 25.

<sup>98</sup> Barnes, Gail V., The University of South, 23.

\$100 per year, attracting a diverse student body for the young string teachers to work with.<sup>99</sup> A study by Gillespie and Hamann in 1998 showed that in general string teachers have a suburban, middle-class background, so this is an opportunity for some of these education students to step outside of their comfort demographic.<sup>100</sup> The average string student population is made up of only 27% non-white students, whereas the String Project at USC is 44% non-white.<sup>101</sup> This is not by accident but rather designed by USC String Project Director, Dr. Gail Barnes, by recruiting students at schools that have a large percentage of low socio-economic families, located in areas close to the University.<sup>102</sup> At USC the 25-30 undergraduate students receive a work-study stipend serving as an incentive for both education and performance majors to teach while going to school.

The String Project at USC is fortunate in terms of the financial support given to them by the university. Because of their large contribution, the String Project can allocate one third of the director's teaching load to the administration of the program and supervising the music education majors in their various teaching responsibilities.<sup>103</sup> They also have their own facilities separate from the School of Music, located directly across the street, with three large classrooms, nine private teaching rooms with two-way observation mirrors, administrative offices, restrooms, and a waiting area for parents. The String Project draws student teachers from all over the country to USC but also is a huge draw for in-state students looking to emulate their experiences in the strong public-school programs they participated in.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 24.

<sup>100</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 24.

<sup>101</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 24.

<sup>102</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 27.

<sup>103</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 25.

<sup>104</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 27.

The String Project at USC and other locations have had successful alumni, both students and student teachers. At USC the String Project boasts a student retention rate of 70% and String Project graduates go on to teach in and out of state, where many encourage their students who are interested in music education to attend USC.<sup>105</sup> Dr. Barnes also states that the program is a good way to attract graduate students, “Having a pool of both preservice teachers and stringed instrument students of all ages is also an asset in attracting graduate students and even visiting scholars.”<sup>106</sup> Dr. Barnes suggests in her article that String Projects should develop a relationship with the public-school string teachers in the area.<sup>107</sup> The String Project recruits students in 3rd grade, two years earlier than the public-school string programs in South Carolina but they support the in-school programs by requiring students to also be part of their school program starting in 5th grade.<sup>108</sup> Dr. Barnes says “Since area schools allow us to recruit in their schools, we believe this is a necessary requirement to which we are committed. In our communications with public school colleagues, we hope to demonstrate respect, trust, and effective communication.”<sup>109</sup>

This is the model for every String Project but there are exceptions and adaptations in different programs across the country. The following survey was designed to gain a greater sense of the common practices of these programs and an insight into how these programs have been adapted. If the goal is to start a new program, it is helpful to understand the model but also to have insight into common practices of other sites. In addition, this information could be used to strengthen one's argument when presenting a new project proposal to a school.

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<sup>105</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 27.

<sup>106</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 27.

<sup>107</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 26.

<sup>108</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 26.

<sup>109</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 27.

## Chapter 4

### **A Survey of String Project Common Practices**

#### Methodology

This research investigates the common practices of String Project sites to find similarities and adaptations to the model program at USC. It is important to understand how these programs have been adapted to strengthen an argument when discussing if a new program should be started at a school. When researching the validity of starting a new program, many questions were presented from those not as familiar with a String Project and the survey below was designed to answer these questions and others. A survey was distributed to gather data on possible adaptations to the model program and gather information on the geographic location, funding, space, and recruitment tools used by different programs.

#### Survey

##### *Subjects*

The subjects chosen for the survey portion of this study were current String Project directors. The survey was first delivered by email with the help of the National String Project Consortium Executive Director, Beth Reed. Current directors were chosen because they are working hands-on in a program, are the most up to date with data about their program, and because they have been making the decisions on how to adapt their specific String Project. The option to reply was completely voluntary for all subjects who received the survey.

The survey was addressed to each specific director and each participant received a recruitment letter (Appendix C) stating the purpose of the research and a link to the survey as a

Google Form (Appendix D). The survey was developed in response to questions about if the program could function in other areas of the country. The survey included fifteen questions comprised of multiple choice, short answer, and Likert scale questions. The intent was to show if String Projects are currently working in a variety of locations, with different directors, and limitations of space and funding.

### *Pilot Test*

A pilot test of the survey was conducted to ensure the clarity of the purpose and questions contained within. The pilot survey was administered to two current professional musicians who are familiar with the String Project. The number of subjects for the test was small and was aimed at helping with clarity of the questions and the length of survey. Participants in the pilot study were given a copy of the survey with a recruitment letter explaining the purpose and were instructed to make notes as to any questions that were unclear. Both subjects returned a completed survey response and improvements to the study were noted and made.

### *Survey Design*

The first section of the survey was designed to glean more information about the background of the String Project directors and gain a clearer sense of the common profile of a director. The questions included how long they have served the role of director, which school they are affiliated with, what city and state they are in and what positions they held before becoming the director. This section helped indicate if geographic location had any effect on the success of a program and gives a clearer picture of who typically fills these positions, as well as what other responsibilities they had at the university outside of their role as director.

The second section of the survey presented questions regarding the location of their String Project in relation to their school and if they shared spaces. These questions were intended to gather information on space accessibility, to help inform how one should plan when starting a new program. The other question in this section was designed to show if most String Projects took place on campus or if student teachers were required to travel to another location to teach.

The third section focused on the student teachers who currently work at a String Project. These questions were asked to gain further understanding of the profile of the student teachers and to gain insight into who else is teaching in these programs outside of string music education majors. These questions were asked to see if only string music education majors are included and if not, what is the profile of others filling the role of student teacher at various sites.

The fourth section of the survey contained questions to gain further insight into the students from the community who are learning at the String Project. These questions included how the String Project has affected the local community, how do you recruit new students, what are your target communities when recruiting, how do you receive funding and how increased access to underserved populations is part of the mission of each program. These questions were included to show how these programs are helping bridge the gap left by struggling public school programs and gives insight into what types of students the String Project are trying to help.

The last section is the most open-ended in the survey and was designed to show how the String Project can be adapted to fit many situations. The model program at USC has shown success for that school and community but it might not be possible at other schools, especially new programs. This question shows how directors across the country have made the program work for their school and community and will hopefully give others encouragement to start a

program of their own, even if theirs does not mirror a program like the one at the University of South Carolina.

### *Research Procedures*

Several measures were taken to ensure that the survey would gain the highest rate of return possible. In designing the survey professors Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir, Ann Ishimaru and Kelsey Nussbaum helped craft the questions and the format of the survey to make it attractive and easy to complete. Google Forms was used to administer the survey, and questions were limited to 15 to make the survey short and strategically starts with more multiple choice and Likert scale questions before moving on to short answer questions. Out of the 42 directors that were contacted in the first round by Beth Reed, 10 were returned. To increase the number of participants, individual String Project directors that had not yet responded were contacted, which brought the number of responses to n=21.

Questions 1, 6, 7 and 9 resulted in pie charts and questions 8, 11 and 12 are represented by bar graphs both shown in the next chapter. A database of the survey's short answer questions was created, and this data was sorted for each question to determine the number of common responses between the participants.

### *Content Validity*

The content of the survey was developed in response to questions received from university faculty about the validity of starting a new String Project at the University of Washington, as well as thoughts on what information would be helpful to know before pitching a new program. Written consent forms were not used for this survey as the act of voluntarily responding was considered an adequate form of consent for this low-risk study. This study was

reviewed by the University of Washington Institutional Review Board for which it was exempt from needing approval. (Appendix B)

### *External Validity*

Because roughly half of String Project directors responded to the survey, it cannot be said for sure how all programs are being run but it gives a general idea of some of the common practices. Also, because respondents were spread across the country in different geographic locations, there can be confidence that the information is not coming from one area of the country. This information can be used by educators and administrators to strengthen their argument for starting a new String Project site.

### *Reliability*

Because of the qualitative nature of part of this survey, a low level of reliability is acceptable because the data was analyzed based on the group's average response. However, the triangulation of data confirming the quantitative aspects of the survey and the implementation of the pilot survey prior to the study enhances the reliability.

## Chapter 5

### Findings

#### Research Questions

The research questions in the survey were designed to get a clearer picture of some of the common practices of different String Project sites to form an argument as to why a new program would be successful. These questions show how different sites have been adapted to fit different locations and situations so that someone trying to start a new program would have more facts and figures when asked some of the questions that came up during my own research and pitch to a university.

#### Questions Asked:

1. How long have you been the director of your String Project?
2. What jobs did you have before becoming the director of your String Project?
3. What is your current role in addition to being the String Project Director?
4. What City and State is your String Project located?
5. What College or University is your String Project affiliated with?
6. Where are your String Project classes located?
7. Are your facilities shared spaces with other programs?
8. What is the profile of your student teachers?
9. What percentage of your student teachers are pursuing a degree in Music Education with an emphasis in strings?
10. How has the String Project had a noticeable impact on the community you live in? How do you measure that impact?
11. How does your program receive funding?
12. How do you recruit beginning students to participate in your program?
13. Who are your target students and communities when recruiting students for the String Project?
14. Is increased access to underserved populations part of the mission statement of your String Project?
15. How does your String Project differ from the model program at The University of South Carolina?

The results of the research will address these questions by identifying common themes and discussing the similarities and differences in responses to gain a clearer understanding of

how different String Project sites operate. The coding of the data resulted in 8 overarching themes which will provide the structure for this analysis. The themes are: (a) profile of a String Project director, (b) geographic location of sites, (c) physical location of classes, (d) student teacher profile, (e) community impact, (f) underserved populations, (g) funding, and (h) adaptations to the model program.

### Profile of String Project Directors

Questions pertaining to the profile of String Project Directors included how long they have served as director, what job they had before becoming director and if they have any additional roles outside of serving as the director. Figure 6 is a chart showing the breakdown of how long each director has been working in their current role. From this information, the majority of directors are new or have been in the position for a while.

How long have you been the director of your String Project?

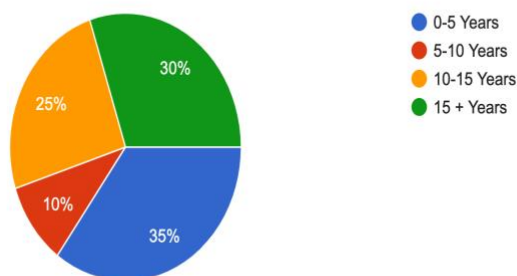


Figure 6: How Long have you been the director of your String Project?

When asked about their role before becoming director, most respondents said they served multiple roles before becoming the director. The majority (12 respondents) responded that they served as a university professor before taking the role of director. The other job that 9

respondents had before becoming director was being a public-school string teacher in some capacity. 3 respondents commented that they were performers prior to the job, 3 respondents commented that they served as a private teacher and 1 respondent replied that they were a graduate student before becoming the director.

The third question in this section was what roles these participants also fill in addition to their role as director. The majority (11 respondents) said that they also serve as the applied instrument teacher of a string instrument at their school. 5 responded that they are also on faculty as a music education professor. 3 said that they also serve as the director of an additional program at their school. 2 respondents said that they serve both the role of director and master teacher of their String Project.

### Geographic Location of Sites

This section of questions has to do with the city and school affiliation of respondents' String Projects. To help break down the geographic location I have split the country into four categories, Western, Central, Southern and Northeast as seen below. The number underneath the region represents the respondent's location.



Figure 7: Geographic Locations of Respondents

This data can also be broken down into two categories, cities and suburban/rural areas. The US department of Education lists a city being defined as 100,000 residents or more.<sup>110</sup> 9 Respondents said that their schools are in cities while 12 said their schools are in more suburban or rural areas. In looking at a program's association with a university or college the schools were broken down into three categories public schools, private schools, and conservatories. 17 respondents said that their program is at a public school, 4 respondents said that their program is at a private school and no respondents said that their program was at a conservatory.

### Physical Location of Classes

Questions in this section aimed to find out more about where the students were being taught in terms of geographic location to campus and if they had shared spaces or if they had exclusive use. As seen in Figure 8, most programs take place on a university campus and only one respondent said that their classes all take place off campus. When asked if the participants shared their teaching space, 100% of respondents answered that they had to share their spaces with other programs at the school.

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<sup>110</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. "School Locale Definitions."  
<https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/urbaned/definitions.asp>. Accessed on Nov. 20, 2021.

Where are your String Project classes located?

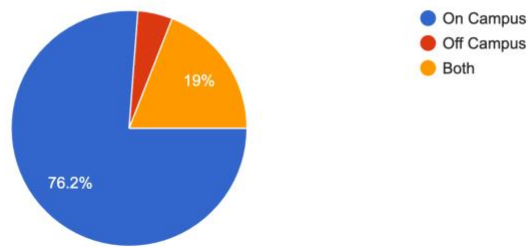


Figure 8: Where are your String Project classes located?

### Student Teacher Profile

In this section, questions were designed to get a sense of the common profile of who is serving as student teachers in these programs. The questions were designed to see if most student teachers were Music Education String Majors and what other degree programs students were in. The results show that the slim majority of students teaching in the programs currently are Music Education majors who have an emphasis of strings, as seen in Figure 9.

What percentage of your student teachers are pursuing a degree in Music Education with an emphasis in strings?

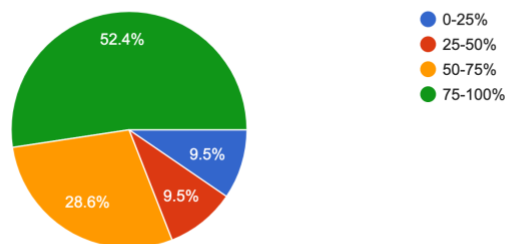


Figure 9: What percentage of your student teachers are pursuing a degree in Music Education with an emphasis in strings?

Participants responded that 100% of sites include String Music education majors, 85.7% of programs include Strings Music Performance students, 19% of respondents also had non-string music education majors teaching and 0% of respondents said that their student teachers included non-string Music Performance students. 12 other answers were given that fall outside of these four main categories. These included music minors, music therapy students, community members, and applied faculty from the school.

### Community Impact

The questions included in this section are how has the String Project had a noticeable impact on the string community around you and how do you measure that impact. All respondents replied in some form that they have seen a positive impact in the community around them because of the String Projects presence, although most did not have ways that they currently measure that impact. Common non-formal observations of improvement from these respondents include greater enrollment in public school programs, greater retention of students in these programs, the creation of new programs within a school district, greater access to rural areas that would not have access to string instruction and increased quality of the public-school instruction. One program measured impact by recording what school each String Project student attends to see if there are areas of the community that they are not reaching. Another program does an annual survey to determine the impact on the community. Their latest survey found that 69% of their students were non-white and 78% of their parents responded that without the String Project their student would not have access to string instruction.

## Underserved Populations

Questions included in this section were how do you recruit students for your program, what are your target communities when recruiting and is greater access for underserved populations part of the mission of your program. When asked about how directors plan on recruiting new students for the programs, 76.7% of respondents said that they use classroom visits, 71.4% do some sort of advertising and 85.7% rely in some part on word of mouth. Other responses included in the answers were social media advertising, school district meeting presentations, open house events, recruitment videos, email campaigns to local musicians and having direct connections with local educators. The next question in this section regarded programs target communities when recruiting and was a short answer question, so the responses varied. Most responded that their target students are all students in public schools with most having an emphasis on recruiting from grades 3-5. 3 respondents said that they make it a point to recruit from school districts who serve more of the underserved students in our communities and 2 respondents noted that they target schools or students who do not have string programs. When asked if increased access to underserved populations was part of their mission statement, respondent's answers have been broken down into three categories, yes, no, and yes but not formally included in our mission statement. 9 String Project directors said that this is included in their mission statement, 2 said no it is not and 6 responded that it is part of their goal but is not formally included in their mission statement.

## Funding

This question was designed to gain more information about how respondents receive funds to support their program. 57.1% of respondents said that they receive support from their college or university, 47.6% said they receive funding from grants and 38.1% of respondents

said they receive funding from donors. Additional responses received to this question were all forms of supporting the program with the tuition from the students.

### Adaptation to the Model Program

This question was asked to gain more information about how the String Project model can be adapted to fit different situations. The bulk of the responses shared that most programs are smaller than USC and do not have their own designated spaces. Most respondents shared that they have classroom space donated by their university that keeps cost down. 2 respondents said that they operate only once a week due to lack of space. One respondent shared that they use space both on-campus as well as a local community center. One respondent said that they operate on two different campuses within this same institution. A few respondents shared that their program focuses more on private lessons than group teaching or orchestra. At one String Project local teachers asked that the program not include homogeneous classes, that they not recruit beginning students and that they not have an orchestra of any kind.

## Chapter Six

### **Analysis**

By analyzing this new data, those who are looking to start a new String Project can see some of the common practices and adaptations used in other successful programs. From the information shared above it can be seen that most directors were university professors before being hired for the job and most current directors also teach applied instrument classes at their school. Using this information, the survey results would recommend that when looking for a director for a new program the first place to look would be the applied string instrument teachers who are currently on faculty. Other places to look for a director, based on responses from the survey, would be local performers who are passionate about public school education or local private teachers. Two respondents said that they served both as director of the program as well as the master teacher, showing that one person could potentially do both jobs, if needed.

Questions in the survey concerning geographic location were designed to help evaluate the success of a String Project in a large city versus a more rural area. As seen from the information gathered in the survey, String Projects have been a success in all areas of the country. String Projects have also shown themselves to be adaptable and successful both in large cities where 9 respondents were located and smaller cities where the remaining 13 respondents were located. In terms of the types of colleges and universities that are hosts to these programs, the majority were public schools, and four were from private institutions. This information shows that both private and public institutions have been shown to be successful host schools.

The space needed to start a new program could bring up concerns when evaluating if a school could host a String Project, data from the survey shows that there are ways to adapt to this

problem. 76.2% of respondents said that they have their classes on campus after school which fits with the model at USC. Holding classes on campus brings the possibility that the college or university will donate the space or give a discounted rental rate. One respondent said that their classes were located off campus and 19% of respondents said they had a mix of on and off campus classrooms. This shows that even though most programs are run on the school's campus, other directors have found ways to make it work when space is limited. One respondent shared that a benefit to having a program off-campus is having a location in an area that targets underserved communities to help with transportation to the program after school. Another respondent shared that they partnered with another program that provides transportation after school.

Data collected from the survey on the profile of student teachers who are currently teaching in String Projects across the country can be used to show that not all preservice teachers are string music education students. 52.4% of respondents selected that 75-100% of their student teachers are music education string students but others responded that they have students with other profiles serving as instructors. These results show that most programs have primarily music education string students teaching in them, but not all. In states like Washington, there is no guarantee that all school programs will have string teachers teaching in them, but if the wind and voice music education students had the opportunity to teach in the String Project, like is seen from the data of this survey, there could be an increase in the quality of teaching no matter the specialty of the teacher.

If your school is in a state where most teachers are teaching outside of their specialty, these programs could be beneficial to give young wind players a space to teach and get feedback over four years on their string teaching skills. Without this program, most wind music education

students could enter the classroom to teach with only two classes in string teaching. The String Project has also been shown to be a great recruitment tool to help persuade music education majors to attend a given college. As many university curriculums stand now, the differentiation between string and wind music education majors is almost nonexistent showing that there may not be very specialized training given to instrumental music education students at these schools. A String Project will send a signal to potential string music education students that a college is committed to specialized training when it comes to string education.

85.7% of respondents said that they have string music performance majors teaching in their program. The information that can be taken from this is that with a String Project those students more interested in performance are still getting the opportunity to have formal training on how to teach strings. 19% of respondents said they had non-string music education students teaching and no respondents said that they had non string performance majors teaching in their program. If a college is concerned that they need a school filled with music education students to start a program, they could look at these examples of directors adapting based on their student body.

The next section of the survey addresses if directors had seen positive impacts of the program outside of their school and if so, how they try to measure that impact. Two programs responded that they measure their impact with surveys. The first tries to measure how far their reach is by keeping a record of the schools that their students attend. This way they can be sure that they are reaching their target demographic of underserved populations. The second of these programs has an annual survey they send out to determine the impact on the community. Results from their last survey showed that 69% of their students were non-white and 78% of their parents responded that without the String Project their students would not have access to public school

string instruction. These programs give immediate help to underserved students while also addressing the teacher shortage by providing hands-on experience and education to student teachers. Surveys and collections of data like this are one way to ensure that programs are being active in terms of equity.

Outside of these two formal ways of collecting information about the community impact of the programs, there were many responses of informal observations and reports of new public school sponsored programs, which shows that String Projects are helping expand access. 100% of respondents reported that they have observed positive community impact because of the existence of the String Project. They reported that there has been an increase in enrollment for the public-school programs in their area. String Projects aim to start students a few years before they begin in public schools, and many have a policy that students must enroll in their school programs if they want to continue taking classes at the String Project. This ensures that they are not taking students away from the school programs, but the opposite is happening, more students are signing up for these programs. Respondents also reported that they have noticed that the retention of students has increased after the implementation of a String Project. If students are prepared before they enter these programs, there could be less need for the schoolteacher to be a string expert. One non-formal observation that was reported was the creation of new district-sponsored in-school programs. This shows that the String Project found their key demographic and provided a service that was not present before. After experiencing the impact of string education through the String Project, parents start to see the benefits and then wonder why their local schools do not have a program like other districts.

In response to questions about how directors recruit for their program, 76.7% responded that they do classroom visits to recruit new students with three directors responding that they

target underserved areas when deciding what classrooms to visit. Only 9 respondents said that providing greater access to underserved populations is part of their program's mission statement and most others said that it is part of their goal but is not included in any formal way. Other ways directors reported that they try to find students for the program are advertising and word of mouth. Word of mouth was reported to work for established programs but when starting a new program, this strategy may not produce the same results. Respondents shared that over time there is less need for recruitment as the students leaving the String Project go on to show success in their school programs. Directors also reported that student teacher graduates are a continuing source of recruitment of both students and preservice teachers.

This portion of the survey focuses on navigating problems concerning the funding of a String Project. The National String Project Consortium suggests that they be contacted as soon as possible when thinking of starting a new program as they often provide financial assistance. Below are the responses of how String Projects are funded outside of the NSPC. 57.1% of respondents said that they receive financial support from their host school. This shows that most programs have financial support from their affiliated institutions but that a sizable percentage outside of that relies on other means. These include grants, donors, and tuition from the students. While tuition can help with the finances of a String Project, respondents reported that it does not have to be the primary source of funding. The goal is to make the program as affordable as possible with the model program charging around \$100 per year of instruction. The fear is that the costs of running a program will be put on tuition hikes, which may affect access for the underserved students.

Already discussed in this chapter were ways that current directors have adapted the String Project to fit within their situation. What can be gathered from the data is that these programs are

highly adaptable and are currently showing success. The model at the University of South Carolina could be followed when possible but of course they have an ideal situation with decades of success and support from their faculty and administration. When starting a new program, it will be much smaller than the model according to the information gained in the survey. Directors also reported that they do not have access to facilities as nice as the model program at USC but have found ways to adapt by sharing classroom spaces and even looking outside of the school for other class locations. Respondents shared that some new programs only meet once a week when starting off and have reported success with this model.

A couple of respondents shared that their program focuses less on group instruction and more on private lessons. This may be a case where the program has been adapted too far away from the model to the point that it is missing the largest benefit of the program, which is having String Music Education students work with beginning students in a group classroom setting to prepare them for the job they will be doing upon graduation. Educators have reported that the String Project addresses the short- and long-term problems seen when trying to reach underserved students. Programs which focus on private lessons are helping with the short-term problem but are not helping solve the long-term problem.

One respondent shared a request from local schoolteachers that can give insight into some issues that may arise when starting a new String Project. In this area schoolteachers requested that the String Project not recruit beginning students and that they also not have an orchestra of any kind. This shows that there is fear that the implementation of a new program would detract from the public-school programs that are currently in place. Based on the data from this survey one could argue that most programs are showing the opposite results. It is important to be in contact with the public-school teachers in your area when starting a new

program and consider putting in place rules such as the one at USC that you must enroll in your public-school program, when appropriate, to continue studying at the String Project.

## Chapter Seven

### **First Steps of Starting a New String Project**

In previous chapters, information has been presented on the current problems facing public school string education, the current research on solutions and results from a survey about how String Projects have shown success in addressing these problems across a variety of adaptations. One of the first steps when starting a String Project is to be in contact with the college's administration, this could be the head of the school of music, string department or music education department. It is also recommended that The National String Project Consortium be contacted as they are the main organizing body that assists both financially and with the planning stages of a new program. Also needed is a person to fill the role of master teacher and/or director once the funding is in place and the NSPC approves a new program.

The National String Project Consortium was founded in 1998 and is a coalition of String Project sites across the country.<sup>111</sup> They describe their goal as leading a dual legacy, first to prepare emerging string instrument music educators for success through hands on teaching experiences and to also provide equitable access to inclusive and high-quality string education opportunities.<sup>112</sup> The consortium provides grant money to almost all of its sites and provides a six-year timeline model as seen in Figure 10. Needed is a \$10,000 per year commitment from a university to pay for the program. If this commitment cannot be met by your school, funds could also be raised outside of the college in the form of grants or donors.

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<sup>111</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

<sup>112</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

<b>Year 1*</b>	<b>NSPC provides \$10,000</b> <b>University Site provides \$10,000 in match funds</b>
<b>Year 2</b>	NSPC provides \$6,650 University Site provides \$10,000 in match funds
<b>Year 3</b>	NSPC provides \$4,250 University Site provides \$10,000 in match funds
<b>Year 4</b>	NSPC provides \$2,650 University Site provides \$10,000 in match funds
<b>Year 5</b>	NSPC provides \$1,100 University Site provides \$10,000 in match funds
<b>Year 6</b>	Site is self-sustaining

Figure 10: 6 year Funding Model.

A sample budget for the first six years of a String Project can be found in Appendix A, however, each site should alter this plan to fit their specific program. This sample budget shows the operating costs of the model program at USC, and follows a few assumptions. These include paying the undergraduate teachers a stipend of \$2,000 per year, and a recommended community student fee starting at \$75 the first year of the program and growing to \$100 by the sixth year. The NSPC also has information helpful when planning for the projected growth of a new program. Figure 11, seen below, addresses how many teachers a program should expect to hire, how to recruit, how many classes will be offered each year and how many students to plan for enrollment.

This plan envisions the following possible scenario for each site:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Hiring</b>	<b>Recruiting</b>	<b>Classes</b>	<b>Approx. # of students</b>
1	Master Teacher 6 undergraduate student teachers	Recruit in local public, private, home schools; Website/E-blasts; Ads/Flyers in media, area	2 beginning classes	30 children in program (15 in each class)
2	Master Teacher 7 undergraduate student teachers	Recruit in local public, private, home schools; Website/E-blasts; Ads/Flyers in media, area	2 beginning classes 1 2nd year class 1 2nd year Orchestra	60 children (35 beginning and 25 2nd year)
3	Master Teacher 8 undergraduate student teachers	Recruit in local public, private, home schools; Website/E-blasts; Ads/Flyers in media, area	3 beginning classes 2nd year classes Private lessons Orchestra	85 children (35 beginning, 30 2nd year, 20 3rd year)
4	Master Teacher 9 undergraduate student teachers	Recruit in local public, private, home schools; Website/E-blasts; Ads/Flyers in media, area	3 beginning classes 2nd year classes Private lessons 2 Orchestras	110 children (40 beginning, 30 2nd year, 25 3rd year, 15 4th year)
5	Master Teacher 10 undergraduate student teachers	Recruit in local public, private, home schools; Website/E-blasts; Ads/Flyers in media, area	3 beginning classes 2nd year classes Private lessons 2 Orchestras	115 children (40 beginning, 30 2nd year, 25 3rd year, 15 4th year, 5 5th year)
6	Master Teacher 10 undergraduate student teachers	Recruit in local public, private, home schools; Website/E-blasts; Ads/Flyers in media, area	3 beginning classes 2nd year classes Private lessons 2 Orchestras	121 children (40 beginning, 30 2nd year, 25 3rd year, 15 4th year, 10 5th year, 1 6th year)

Figure 11: 6 year organizational plan from “Home.” *National String Project Consortium*, 2022,

<https://www.stringprojects.org/>.

Although the design of each String Project can vary from site to site, based on the information gathered in the survey, there are a few requirements that must be part of any proposal to be considered from NSPC grants. Students must start the program in a large heterogeneous beginning class, the program must take place at the college or university during after school hours, the program must have a master teacher with hands on experience, the students must participate in the public-school programs, the program must supplement the university coursework for the student teachers, the program fees have to remain low, and the program should also offer scholarships.<sup>113</sup> The following are site requirements that the NSPC encourages consideration of before applying. These include large community size, proximity of city to campus, necessary facilities at the college, availability of a master teacher, financial commitment from institution, and support from surrounding public school string teachers. The NSPC states that areas that do not currently have functioning string music education programs will not be considered well-suited for receiving the grant.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

<sup>114</sup> The National String Project Consortium.

## Conclusion

As shown in chapter one, there is a shortage of quality string teachers in the country's public schools, and as research shows, the String Project can help assist this problem in any area of the country. Some reports suggest that the number of string educators entering the work force should be doubled to keep up with demand. Studies show that interest in string education from students continues to rise but there are not enough teachers to take the open positions. Public school strings programs are one way that underserved populations can gain access to string education, so to see an increase in diversity within the string classical music community there should be an expansion of these programs.

There is currently a wealth of research on suggestions to help with these problems. After school programs are currently in place that help the students who are struggling to learn in the public-school programs. Community musicians could be volunteering their time and trying to lift the profession of teaching by focusing on the positive aspects when relating to students. College teachers are suggested to give scholarships and encourage students to experience teaching for themselves to see if it might be a possible career path. All these efforts are resulting in positive changes, according to research, but they mostly are helping the students and not the teachers.

One of the problems discussed in chapter one was how to recruit more educators for the public-school classrooms. Having a String Project at a university serves as a recruiting tool for a school of music by signaling to potential students that there is a specialized training for string education. The work stipend offered to the student teachers is also a recruiting tool providing an incentive for preservice teachers. The opportunity of having four years of hands-on teaching experience is another attractive feature of having a String Project.

Reports from survey respondents signaled that there were several ways to make working at the String Project easier for preservice teachers. Hosting the String Project on campus could make access for student teachers much easier than having them travel after school to another location. Having classes on campus also brings potential future students to the college as String Project students, providing a large pool to recruit from in the future.

Another problem discussed in chapter one was teachers teaching outside of their specialty, in many cases wind teachers teaching strings. The goal of the String Project is in part to provide more string teachers who are string specialists. In dire circumstances, such as what is seen in Seattle, it would be helpful to include wind music education majors as student teachers at the String Project. Many university education degree paths include two classes for wind players, one on upper and one on lower strings. With a String Project at your school, the music education wind players have an opportunity to get four years of experience in string instruction just as the string players are invited to do. The way hiring practices are in the state of Washington many wind players may be required to teach strings and could struggle with instruction on fundamentals. It can be gathered from Question 8 of the survey that not only are music education wind students participating in these programs, but respondents also said that they have a sizable percentage of student teachers who specialize in winds.

As for string performance majors, they could have the opportunity to participate as well. When faced with financial struggle many performers turn to teaching, some with very little training and experience. One way to avoid this is to have performance majors experience teaching before they graduate. From the survey we can see that String Projects are reporting that they have a sizable percentage of student teachers who are currently performance majors, showing that a String Project can help provide said teaching experience.

The immediate fix is that the String Project provides after-school string instruction starting in the 3rd grade at a price that more families can afford. These students can start two years earlier than they would in school programs, and they will have quadruple the instruction time. Currently in most Seattle Public Schools beginning strings programs, the students meet once a week for 30 minutes. At the String Project they could take classes twice a week after school for an hour. They will also be taught by teachers who are actively learning and are carefully observed by the master teacher and director.

The String Project also sets up the next steps in music education for the students all within one program. After their first beginning years they can sign up for very low-cost private lessons and can also advance through the programs higher level orchestras as they improve. As heard earlier from the respondents in the survey, most String Project students go on to play in their public-school programs and because they received a bit of a head start, the retention rates are higher.

The long-term fix that the String Project will help with is getting well trained string educators in the earliest music classes in the public schools to help even more underserved children. Some of these families may never be able to afford private lessons yet their children hear in class “It’s not my job to teach you that.” Some public-school teachers in Seattle are misguided in what skills they should be addressing in the classroom. They speak as if students should have perfected their technique in their fifth grade, once-a-week thirty-minute class taught by a wind player. With String Project graduates in the classroom students will be able to ask for advice on technique and receive useful information to help them.

The String Project provides a truly shocking figure that 75% of their graduates go on to enjoy a thirty-year career teaching in the public schools, compared to the national average of

50% of teachers leaving in the first five years.<sup>115</sup> This could be due to a combination of positive factors String Project teachers get to experience. These graduates have had four years of classroom experience before entering their first year of teaching, giving them exposure to many situations first year teachers struggle with such as diverse student body, recruiting and filling the classroom and having to work with administrators.

Another great benefit of the String Project upon graduation is the community they are surrounded with. These students were supported by young colleagues, master teachers and a director, all giving them advice during school and upon graduation. Students often stay in the area of their alma mater creating a community of other String Project graduates. Many of their master teachers and directors stay in contact with them upon graduation and provide advice and support throughout their teaching careers.

Data from the survey in chapter five shows that these programs have reported success and are adaptable to fit different situations across the country. It also shows that the programs are reaching a diverse student population. The String Project directors shared many ways that their programs have been successful including multiple locations for classes, a variety of student teachers participating, different funding models and adaptations made to work with local programs already in place.

The public-school string programs are currently struggling to serve underserved students in Seattle and other cities across America. Colleges are not providing enough quality instructors to keep up with demand and community members are currently trying solutions that mainly help the students and not the teachers. Once these underqualified teachers get into the classrooms

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<sup>115</sup> Barnes, Gail V., *The University of South*, 25.

upon graduation, many leave within the first five years, leaving these children to be taught by a revolving door of mostly wind players. If you are a professor looking for solutions, you could help with these problems by supporting a String Project at your school. If you are a local artist or advocate you can inquire into your local universities and see if your area might have a need for a String Project. If you are a student at all interested in becoming a music educator, look for a school with a String Project to get a high-quality hands-on music education.

## Appendix A

### First 6 Years Budget from NSPC

<b>Year 1</b>		
Expenses:		
	6 undergraduate student teachers @ \$2000 per teacher	\$12,000
	Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	\$5,000
	Start-up Expenses (participant scholarships, music/classroom materials, secretary fees, stands, chairs, publicity, etc.)	\$7,500
		\$24,500
Income:		
	Grant	\$10,000
	30 children participating @ \$75/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,500
	University funding	\$10,000
		\$24,500
<b>Year 2</b>		
Expenses:		
	7 undergraduate student teachers @ \$2,000 per teacher	\$14,000
	Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	\$5,000
	Continuing Expenses (participant scholarships, music/classroom materials, secretary fees, stands, chairs, publicity, etc.)	\$6,900
		\$25,900
Income:		
	Grant	\$6,650
	35 children participating @ \$75/semester X 2 semesters	\$5,250
	25 children participating @ \$80/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,000
	University funding	\$10,000
		\$25,900
<b>Year 3</b>		
Expenses:		
	8 undergraduate student teachers @ \$2,000 per teacher	\$16,000
	Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	\$5,000
	Continuing Expenses (participant scholarships, music/classroom materials, secretary fees, stands, chairs, publicity, etc.)	\$6,700
		\$27,700
Income:		
	Grant	\$4,250
	35 children participating @ \$75/semester X 2 semesters	\$5,250
	30 children participating @ \$80/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,800
	20 children participating @ \$85/semester X 2 semesters	\$3,400
	University funding	\$10,000
		\$27,700

<b>Year 4</b>		
Expenses:		
	9 undergraduate student teachers @ \$2,000 per teacher	\$18,000
	Master Teacher (for five hours/week)	\$6,000
	Continuing Expenses (participant scholarships, music/classroom materials, secretary fees, stands, chairs, publicity, etc.)	\$6,600
		\$30,600
Income:		
	Grant	\$2,650
	40 children participating @ \$75/semester X 2 semesters	\$6,000
	30 children participating @ \$80/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,800
	25 children participating @ \$85/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,250
	15 children participating @ \$90/semester X 2 semesters	\$2,700
	Local fundraising	\$200
	University funding	\$10,000
		\$30,600
<b>Year 5</b>		
Expenses:		
	10 undergraduate student teachers @ \$2,000 per teacher	\$20,000
	Master Teacher (for five hours/week)	\$6,000
	Continuing Expenses (participant scholarships, music/classroom materials, secretary fees, stands, chairs, publicity, etc.)	\$4,400
		\$30,400
Income:		
	Grant	\$1,100
	40 children participating @ \$75/semester X 2 semesters	\$6,000
	30 children participating @ \$80/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,800
	25 children participating @ \$85/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,250
	15 children participating @ \$90/semester X 2 semesters	\$2,700
	5 children participating @ \$100/semester X 2 semesters	\$750
	Outside Local support	\$800
	University funding	\$10,000
		\$30,400
<b>Year 6</b>		
Expenses:		
	10 undergraduate student teachers @ \$2,000 per teacher	\$20,000
	Master Teacher (for five hours/week)	\$6,000
	Continuing Expenses (participant scholarships, music/classroom materials, secretary fees, stands, chairs, publicity, etc.)	\$4,950
		\$30,950
Income:		
	Grant	\$0

	40 children participating @ \$75/semester X 2 semesters	\$6,000
	30 children participating @ \$80/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,800
	25 children participating @ \$85/semester X 2 semesters	\$4,250
	15 children participating @ \$90/semester X 2 semesters	\$2,700
	10 children participating @ \$100/semester X 2 semesters	\$2,000
	1 child participating @ \$100/semester X 2 semesters	\$200
	Outside Local support	\$1,000
	University funding	\$10,000
		\$30,950

## Appendix B

### IRB Exemption



#### DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

February 28, 2022

Dear Michael King:

On 2/28/2022, the University of Washington Human Subjects Division (HSD) reviewed the following application:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Common Practices Survey of String Project Directors
Investigator:	Michael King
IRB ID:	STUDY00015101
Funding:	None

#### Exempt Status

**HSD determined that your proposed activity is human subjects research that qualifies for exempt status (Category 2).** This determination may or may not be based on the Limited IRB Review process.

- COVID NOTE: See the [HSD website](#) for the latest COVID guidelines for conducting human subjects research.
- This determination is valid for the duration of your research.
- This means that your research is exempt from the federal human subjects regulations, including the requirement for IRB approval and continuing review.
- **Depending on the nature of your study, you may need to obtain other approvals or permissions to conduct your research. For example, you might need to apply for access to data or specimens (e.g., to obtain UW student data). Or, you might need to obtain permission from facilities managers to approach possible subjects or conduct research procedures in the facilities (e.g., Seattle School District; the Harborview Emergency Department).**
- HSD does not make determinations on behalf of other institutions. If other institutions are involved in the research, they may need to make their own determination or they may decide to be guided by our determination.

If you consider changes to the activities in the future and know that the changes will require IRB review (or you are not certain), you may request a review or new determination by submitting a Modification to this application. For information about what changes require a Modification, refer to the [GUIDANCE: Exempt Research](#).

Thank you for your commitment to ethical and responsible research. We wish you great success!

Sincerely,

Galen Basse  
Team Operations Lead, IRB A  
206.685.1211  
[gkbasse@uw.edu](mailto:gkbasse@uw.edu)

4333 Brooklyn Ave. NE, Box 359470 Seattle, WA 98195-9470  
main 206.543.0098 fax 206.543.9218 [hsdinfo@u.washington.edu](mailto:hsdinfo@u.washington.edu) [www.washington.edu/research/hsd](http://www.washington.edu/research/hsd)  
Implemented 02/15/2022– Version 1.13 - Page 1 of 1

## Appendix C

### Survey Recruitment Letter

Dear (salutation):

My name is Michael King and I am researching what goes into starting a new String Project while completing my DMA at The University of Washington. I have been working with my advisor Saeunn Thorsteinsdottir, Kelsey Nussbaum of the Music Education department, and Ann Ishimaru of the Education department at UW. Those of us who are familiar with the program understand their importance but many non-education experts are still confused about some of the common practices among String Projects sites.

Enclosed is a short 15 question survey that may help us to understand this issue. By filling out and returning the survey, you may help us better understand how we can strengthen our argument that String Projects are successful in many forms and should continue to expand. Thank you for your time and consideration in helping us answer these important questions.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email or call Michael King at 864-680-9777.

Sincerely,

Michael King

he/him

The University of Washington

Music Building, Box 353450 Seattle WA 98195

206-543-1201

Survey:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfBjDh63DZcAhGX9AabXsA9y7rQdTq3edfqIv2-LNISIqkGcw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfBjDh63DZcAhGX9AabXsA9y7rQdTq3edfqIv2-LNISIqkGcw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

## Appendix D

### Survey

#### A Survey of String Project Directors

1. How long have you been the director of your String Project?

*Mark only one oval.*

- 0-5 Years
- 5-10 Years
- 10-15 Years
- 15 + Years

2. What jobs did you have before becoming the director of your String Project?

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3. What is your current role in addition to being the String Project director?

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4. What City and State is your String Project located?

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5. What College or University is your String Project affiliated with?

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6. Where are your String Project classes located?

*Mark only one oval.*

- On Campus
- Off Campus
- Both

7. Are your facilities shared spaces with other programs?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

8. What is the profile of you student teachers? Choose more than 1 if applicable.

*Check all that apply.*

- Music Education String Students
- Music Education Non-String Students
- Music Performance String Students
- Music Performance Non-String Students

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

9. What percentage of your student teachers are pursuing a degree in Music Education with an emphasis in strings?

*Mark only one oval.*

- 0-25%
- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%

10. How has the String Project had a noticeable impact on the community you live in?  
How do you measure that impact?

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11. How does your program receive funding? Choose more than 1 if applicable.

*Check all that apply.*

Support from College/University

Grants

Donors

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

12. How do you recruit beginning students to participate in your program? Choose more than 1 if applicable.

*Check all that apply.*

Classroom Visits

Advertising

Word of Mouth

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

13. Who are your target students and communities when recruiting students for the String Project?

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14. Is increased access to underserved populations part of the mission statement of your String Project?

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15. How does your String Project differ from the model program at The University of South Carolina?

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